

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 192850

FOL RPT DURGAN 0410 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO DAR ES SALAAM
GABORONE LAGOS LILONGWE LONDON LUSAKA MAPUTO PRETORIA USUN
JUL 17, 1978

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L DURBAN 0410

FROM LOW

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RH

SUBJ: RHODESIA: THE ALL PARTIES MEETING

1. FOLLOWING FOR THE INFORMATION OF POSTS IS A SUMMARY
OF WHERE WE STAND ON AN ALL PARTY CONFERENCE BASED ON
SIX WEEKS OF DISCUSSIONS BY GRAHAM AND MYSELF IN
SOUTHERN AFRICA. WE HAVE MET A NUMBER OF TIMES WITH
ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS: SMITH, MUZOREWA, SITHOLE AND
CHIRAU AND THEIR DEPUTIES ON THE INTERNAL SIDE; AS WELL
AS ALL OF THEIR VARIOUS DEPUTIES, NKOMO AND MUGABE IN
MAPUTO AND LUSAKA; AND MACHEL, KUNDA, NYERERE, KHAMA, AS
WELL HAS BRAND FOURIE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. IN
SALISBURY WE HAVE HELD CONVERSATIONS WITH A WIDE VARIETY
OF PERSONS REPRESENTING ALL SHADES OF OPINION.

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2. AS REPORTED EARLIER, MARCH 3 SALISBURY AGREEMENT HAS NOT
SUCCEEDED IN ITS OBJECTIVES OF ENDING THE WAR AND SANCTIONS.
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE TRANSITION GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN FEW.
WHILE THE INTERNAL NATIONALIST LEADERS CONTINUE TO GIVE
FIRM PUBLIC SUPPORT TO THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT, THERE IS IN-
CREASING RECOGNITION IN BOTH THE BLACK AND WHITE COMMUNITIES

THAT MODIFICATION OF SOME KIND OR ANOTHER WILL BECOME NECESSARY. EVEN THE WHITE-DOMINATED PRESS WRITES OPENLY OF THE FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT TO REACH A CEASE FIRE AND IN-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MARCH 3 INTERNAL SETTLEMENT. MOST PEOPLE SEE AN ALL PARTIES MEETING AS THE ONLY HOPE OF ACHIEVING A SETTLEMENT THAT CAN END THE WAR AND PROVIDE FOR ORDERLY PROGRESS TOWARDS MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE. WE ARE CONSTANTLY VISITED BY LEADERS OF CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS, POLITICAL FIGURES, BUSINESSMEN AND OTHERS WHO SUPPORT AN ALL PARTIES MEETING. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS DIFFICULT TO REPORT CONCRETE PROGRESS TOWARD SCHEDULING A MEETING.

3. WITHIN THE INTERNAL GROUP IT IS PROBABLE THAT SMITH HIMSELF WOULD WELCOME A MEETING WITH THE PATRIOTIC FRONT. EACH OF HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TAKES HIM A STEP CLOSER TO ACCEPTING A MEETING. MUZOREWA AND SITHOLE CONTINUE TO OPPOSE IT ALTHOUGH IN THE FORMER'S MOST RECENT STATEMENT HE AGREED TO ATTEND A MEETING IF IT WAS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

4. AT THE SAME TIME THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND PARTICULARLY NKOMO'S ZAPU HAS SHOWN GROWING IMPATIENCE WITH THE IDEA OF A MEETING AND DECREASING SUPPORT FOR THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THOUGH NKOMO HAS NOT REJECTED A MEETING, HE TALKS INCREASINGLY OF MILITARY VICTORY IN TEN MONTHS. MUGABE CONTINUE TO INSIST ON HIS VERSION OF A CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD BE CONFINED TO CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS AND BE NEGOTIATED CONFIDENTIAL

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STRICTLY THROUGH THE BRITISH EVEN IF OTHER PARTIES WERE PRESENT.

5. AS A RESULT, IT HAS PROVED DIFFICULT TO PIN DOWN A TIME AND LOCATION FOR A MEETING. ON SUBSTANCE THE PARTIES CONTINUE FAR APART. THOUGH SMITH PROBABLY RECOGNIZES THAT HE MUST MOVE OFF OF THE MARCH 3 AGREEMENT IF A MEETING IS TO BE SUCCESSFUL, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT HE YET UNDERSTANDS HOW FAR HE MUST MOVE TO OFFER SOMETHING WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE PF. THERE ARE SOME INDICATIONS THAT MEMBERS OF THE REGIME LIKE HIS DEPUTY DAVID SMITH MAY UNDERSTAND THIS. SO FAR THE REGIME HAS NOT INDICATED THAT IT IS PREPARED TO RETURN TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSAL AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION. EVEN IF IT DID SO THERE WOULD STILL REMAIN MAJOR AREAS OF DIFFERENCE SUCH AS THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL WHERE BOTH THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NATIONALISTS ARE DEMANDING A MAJORITY, COMPOSITION OF THE POLICE, A BLOCKING WHITE MECHANISM FOR AMENDMENT OF THE INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION AND PERHAPS CREATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE ARMY.

6. IN SPITE OF THE DIFFICULTIES STILL TO BE OVERCOME BEFORE A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE CAN BE MOUNTED, THERE ARE MANY PRESSURES WORKING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION: THE CONTINUING

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WAR, THE DETERIORATION OF THE ECONOMY OF RHODESIA, AND THE GROWING PRAGMATIC SUPPORT FROM FRONT LINE COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY MOZAMBIQUE AND ZAMBIA TO REACH A SETTLEMENT.

7. IN SUMMARY, THE CONFERENCE MAY WELL DEVELOP WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH TO SIX WEEKS. HOWEVER, THE POLITICAL WILL OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS WILL HAVE TO GROW BEFORE THE OBSTACLES TO AGREEMENT AT SUCH A CONFERENCE CAN BE OVERCOME. IT IS NOT OUTSIDE THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY BUT A FAIR AMOUNT OF WORK STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE. IN THE MEANTIME, GRAHAM AND I ARE RETURNING TO LONDON JULY 17 FOR A STOCK-TAKING WITH SECRETARY VANCE, DICK MOOSE, AND DR. OWEN.

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8. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO REPEAT TO OTHER POSTS AS APPROPRIATE. FARBER
UNQUOTE VANCE

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